

part of the building, nor sought to produce effects, which, though they may be allowed to belong to a more advanced period of pictorial art, are yet very undesirable in windows. Equally does my experience disagree with his, that the best works of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are distinguished by strong contrasts of colour, and light and shade: the windows in Brussels quoted by him, if my recollection serves me truly, would not support any such view. I think I may safely assert that the characteristics he mentions never obtained but a very partial influence, and were attempting to emulate oil pictures in effects as far beyond their reach as they were destructive of those fine qualities of brilliancy and colour legitimately belonging to glass, and which the highest efforts of pictorial art can never attain. I may quote a very late (and in some respects a very fine) window, now in St. George's, Hanover-square, where the flatness is perfectly preserved, in support of these remarks. Of course, I do not mean to say that a greater amount of shading was not used in the later styles, and used with greater skill and delicacy. What I wish to insist on is this, that where the qualities and true use of painted glass have been properly understood, the importance of flatness has never been lost sight of, and that its preservation was not merely an accident with the early painters, nor was neglected by the more finished artists of later times. And having said this much on the architectural and relative bearings of painted windows, would you permit me a few words in reference to the proposed scheme for the decoration of St. Paul's? I cannot see that there is, or ought to be, any difficulty in carrying out the third section of Mr. Cockerell's report, viz. to reglaze the whole of the twenty-three lower windows of the cathedral with Scripture subjects in coloured glass. The very rev. the Archdeacon speaks of lost pigments; but I hope I am not disrespectful when I say, that it is neglected principles, not lost pigments, which we are called upon to deplore. Mr. Papworth would seem to assert, that our country has no artist fit to lay pencil on the interior of St. Paul's, and that the painters and glaziers, as he is pleased to term the makers of stained windows (I must suppose him to include the designers), will be likely to produce even more extraordinary paradoxes than anything yet exhibited on the walls of the "Academy exhibition!" Such things are easily said, and I have no dispute with nicknames, but when he says "that the employment of stained glass in figure subjects would be unacceptable—inapplicable with sound sense to our cathedral"—I think he assumes too much; and that, on the contrary, by usage, precedent, and sound sense, the windows in the interior of a great church like St. Paul's, are, perhaps, the most fit place for such representations—the eye being naturally drawn to them, and the whole building acting as one magnificent frame.

I have no conscious desire of raising the art of glass painting to an undue elevation. I have said before that it must be subject to the architecture.

Some there are who fear that mediæval taste and influences may, through means of the glass, force their way with evil effect into St. Paul's: to this I have one remark, i.e. that the beauty of ancient windows results, more than is generally admitted, from the perfect knowledge the artists of those days had of the quality and capability of their material, and the purposes and relation of their art. The same truths acted upon will render coloured windows as applicable and advantageous to St. Paul's as to Chartres, Strasbourg, or Cologne; and though St. Paul's may demand a fuller and grander character of design, I can scarcely allow our country to be totally wanting in artists equal to such an achievement: at all events, let not the glass or the windows bear the burden. They offer scope for the most elevated design. The light is supplied to them direct from heaven, while the beauty of the material—its brilliancy and purity (quite separate and superior to any other kind of transparent painting)—the simplicity of its

treatment, and the regality of its composition, seem to me to give it a peculiar appropriateness for such subjects as are proposed by Mr. Cockerell to be represented in the windows of St. Paul's. F. W. O.

THE DECORATION OF ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL.

PERMIT me to offer a few remarks upon a subject which interests not alone the authorities of St. Paul's, not alone the architects and artists of the metropolis, but every Protestant Englishman, Churchman or Dissenter, and all who love the grandeur and beauty of this great camp of the English race.

Of a thousand fancies which lift their fronts into the summer sky, this alone, dedicated in the name of the great preacher and expositor of the Gospel, has been the work of a people and its kings,—more than this, stands alone, even unto opprobrium, the peculiar temple of the Reformed Faith throughout the world. There would be a marked indecency, then, in adopting in the decoration of this edifice any model, however consecrated in the traditions of art, however acceptable to individual predilections, which should be alien to the affections or offensive to the tastes of the great commonwealth of Protestantism. Neither have we here a fitting theatre for experiment in educating the English mind to a knowledge and love of art; we have, on the contrary, the mightiest edifice wherein, over the whole world, the pure Gospel of Christ is appointed to be preached by the voice of man.

While, therefore, I would carefully shrink from any expression which might be interpreted as offensive to any of those who have put their hands to a great work, I submit that we cannot argue this question as a mere matter of art, or as submitted for final solution to any self-constituted court of appeal. I regret to hear of decisions so far advanced that we are already told the work of Sir James Thornhill is to be restored. I cannot think that Wren ever allowed his cupola to be overlaid with the architectural portraiture, now these many years happily half effaced, with other than a heavy hand. That mighty span grew not under his hands to appear at last an imposture, a distortion, an impending wreck, at the will of an illustrator. Colour, gild to the full; make it a glory to stand over the tomb of Nelson, and lift up one's eyes on high; but use the cunning pencil of Him who painted the golden and tender azure tints of our own northern sky. Let it be a canopy of melodious, interwoven quiet and splendour; let us look up as amid the trees to a glorious summer heaven; but—but "the Lord deliver" it from Sir James Thornhill. Neither, to be consistent and true, can we make the walls of St. Paul's a canvass on which to illustrate the history or the epochs of the dealings of the Unseen with men. For it is not to this or that god, whose exploits are the creations of fancy—whose form some symbol of nature—we may haply receive from the hand of an approved delineator of fables, that we have reared this marvellous dome, these stately walls, this majestic portal. No ecstacy of passionate art can recall to the eyes of men the effigies of Him once "manifest in the flesh;" no trace remains to us of the likeness of those whose words and works are written for us with the pencil of truth. Leave the fabler alone with the fabulous: Bacchus or Ariadne we meet not in the realms of futurity. I would say, then, if we must intrude the sensuous food of the eye where the voice of man was intended to reign omnipotent, at least go not beyond the golden path of the parables of the Saviour. For myself, I can turn my back on the gaudy walls of Notre Dame de Lorette to learn of the truth-loving Moslem. I can recall to remembrance the village church of our youth, and, while I would strain splendour and beauty to the utmost reach of magnificence and art, I would let no other voices speak from the walls of our temple than those which Guttenberg has scattered over the world, on the pages of holy writ. Lastly, I would say, waste no valued hours, do no work for the ages to come that will not stand the search of a coming

monocleism, for we know what the hand is that is lifted with "axes and hammers." P. H.

As far as can be made out from what has been reported concerning it, the recently started project for decorating the interior of St. Paul's has elicited only vague general ideas, more or less conflicting, without being confronted with each other. Unless the matter should now be dropped altogether, the rational and only safe way of proceeding would be, before any of them were determined upon for adoption, to test the several schemes by means of such drawings and views as would show the respective ideas fully shaped out so that they might be fairly judged of and compared with each other. That course of proceeding would, of course, be attended with some trouble and expense, but might save considerable perplexity afterwards, if not expense likewise.

Notwithstanding that the opinion of an unknown individual is not likely to have any weight, I venture to give mine upon two points—the dome and the windows. Most strongly am I opposed to the restoration of the present paintings by Thornhill, or the substitution of anything similar, for the decoration of the dome; because, so applied, not only does painting (i.e. picture) usurp the place of architectural ornamentation, but does so greatly to its own disadvantage: for while the concavity is cut up, and the idea of coming overhead is in a manner destroyed and done away with, pictures cannot possibly but show themselves imperfectly, and more or less distorted in such preposterous situations, more especially at such a height from the floor as are those in St. Paul's—a height, besides, nearly double the diameter of the dome itself. Should paintings so placed be of any value as works of art, they are thrown away, since they cannot be enjoyed as they deserve, but almost any unmeaning dabs of colour would produce an equal degree of general effect. Or else, at such a distance from the eye, figures require to be enlarged to such colossal dimensions as considerably to reduce the scale of the architecture. On the other hand, the unusual elevation of the dome above the floor is greatly in favour of its being ornamented architecturally with painted coffers or compartments, because the deception could hardly be detected from below. Some will protest against that as sham. Well, call it sham, if you like,—at any rate it is a very innocent sort of hypocrisy—would that we had never any worse!—and has the merit of being free from absurdity and contradiction. It would, indeed, be a substitute for a reality, but for a very natural and legitimate one.

If anything is to be done at all, something must be done to the windows, or else they will show as positive blemishes. Even now they have a very shabby look, and are mean and dingy even to sublimity. I myself have always regretted that the architect did not discard wide windows altogether, except those of the clerestory, and light the aisles through the small segmental domes in the vaulting, opening and glazing them, instead of leaving them solid. In lieu of the present windows, there would then have been compartments for fresco, which, seen through the arcades of the nave, with the light diffused upon them from above, would, I conceive, have produced a strikingly beautiful effect. The exterior, too, would have been greatly the better for the absence of windows, the present ones being quite the reverse of ornamental in every respect,—certainly of most rude and poverty-stricken appearance in their glazing.

No scheme of improvement which does not include entirely fresh windows as a sine qua non in it can be satisfactory; and perhaps improvement ought, instead of finishing, to begin with them, because, if they could be rendered decidedly ornate features, and made to give an air of general richness to the interior, a moderate degree of embellishment in other respects might be found sufficient. This advice, it may be thought, smells strongly of either glazier or glass-painter; and if the reader can reconcile such suspicion with a dislike to side